SEC. 5.—"Asylums to be supported and managed according to the provisions of this Act, may be provided under this Act for reception and relief of the sick, insane, or infirm, or other class or classes of the poor, chargeable in unions and parishes in the Metropolis, and in this Act the term asylum means an asylum provided under this Act."

SEC. 6.—"In order to the provision of asylums the Poor Law Board may from time to time, by order, combine into districts, unions, or parishes, or unions and parishes in the Metropolis, as they think fit, and may from time to time alter any such district by addition, sub-division, separation of part, or otherwise."

SEC. 61.—"The expenses to be provided out of the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund."

SEC. 15.—"The Poor Law Board may from time to time by order direct the managers to purchase or hire, or to build, and in either case to fit up a building or buildings for the asylum of such nature and size and according to such plan, and in such manner as the Poor Law Board think fit, and the managers shall carry such directions into execution."

SEC. 22.—"The managers shall have the like powers as Guardians for the relief, maintenance, and management of the inmates of the asylum, and shall from time to time provide such medicines, appliances, and requisites for the medical and surgical care and treatment of the inmates, and cause the same to be furnished and used according to such rules as the Poor Law Board from time to time by order direct."

[39 *and* 40 *Vict., c.* 61, 1876.]

SEC. 40.—"Whereas doubts have been entertained as to the extent of the powers given to the Poor Law Board by Sections 5 and 6 of the Metropolitan Poor Act, 1867. It is hereby enacted and declared that those powers may be exercised by the Local Government Board in order to the provision of asylums, workhouses, or other buildings for the reception of any class or classes of the poor in the Metropolis."—*Charity Reform Papers, No.* 2, *Jan.*, 1880.

AN ANTIQUARY'S GHOST STORY.

In the *Athenæum* for Jan. 17, 1880, there appeared a letter from Dr. Wilks explanatory of the narrative which, in a previous issue, had been communicated to that journal under the title of "An Antiquary's Ghost Story." As some of our readers may not have seen the narrative, we insert it, in order to render Dr. Wilks's letter intelligible. It is written by the Rev. Dr. Jessopp, Head Master of King Edward VI. School, at Norwich:—

"On the 10th October, 1879, I drove over from Norwich to Mannington Hall to spend the night at Lord Orford's. Though I was in perfect health and high spirits, it is fair to say that, for some weeks previously, I had had a great deal to think about, some little anxiety, and some considerable mental strain of one kind or another. I was not, however, conscious of anything approaching weariness, irritability, or 'fag' I arrived at four p.m., and was engaged in pleasant and animated conversation till it was time to dress for dinner. We dined at seven; our party numbered six persons. Of these four at least had been great travellers. I myself was rather a listener; the talk was general and discursive, and amused and interested me greatly. Not for a single moment did it turn upon the supernatural; and it was chiefly concerned with questions of art and the experiences of men who had seen a great deal of the world, and could describe intelligently what they had seen and comment upon it suggestively. I have very rarely been at a more pleasant party. After

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dinner we played a rubber. We 'left off as we began,' and, as two of the guests had some distance to drive, we broke up at half-past ten.

"The main object of my going over to Mannington was to examine and take notes upon some very rare books in Lord Orford's library, which I had been anxiously wishing to get a sight of for some years, but had never been fortunate enough to meet with up to this time. I asked leave to sit up for some hours and make transcripts. His lordship at first wished me to let his valet remain in attendance to see all lights put out, but as this would have embarrassed and compelled me to go to bed earlier than I wished, and as it seemed likely that I should be occupied till two or three in the morning, it was agreed that I should be left to my own devices and the servants should be allowed to retire. By eleven o'clock I was the only person downstairs, and I was very soon busily at work and absorbed in my occupation.

"The room in which I was writing was a large one, with a huge fireplace and a grand old chimney; and it is needless to say that it is furnished with every comfort and luxury. The library opens into this room, and I had to pass out from where I was sitting into this library and get upon a chair to reach the volumes I wanted to examine. There were six small volumes in it. I took them down and placed them at my right hand in a little pile, and set to work—sometimes reading, sometimes writing. As I finished with a book I placed it in front of me. There were four silver candlesticks upon the table, the candles all burning, and, as I am a chilly person, I sat myself at one corner of the table with the fire at my left, and at intervals, as I had finished with a book, I rose, knocked the fire together, and stood up to warm my feet. I continued in this way at my task till nearly one o'clock. I had got on better than I expected, and I had only one more book to occupy me. I rose, wound up my watch, and opened a bottle of seltzer water, and I remember thinking to myself that I should get to bed by two after all. I set to work at the last little book. I had been engaged upon it about half-an-hour, and was just beginning to think that my work was drawing to a close, when, *as I was actually writing*, I saw a large white hand within a foot of my elbow. Turning my head, there sat a figure of a somewhat larger man, with his back to the fire, bending slightly over the table, and apparently examining the pile of books that I had been at work upon. The man's face was turned away from me, but I saw his closely-cut reddish brown hair, his ear and shaved cheek, the eye-brow, the corner of his right eye, the side of the forehead, and the large high cheek-bone. He was dressed in what I can only describe as a kind of ecclesiastical habit of thick corded silk or some such material, close up to the throat, and a narrow rim or edging, of about an inch broad, of satin or velvet, serving as a stand-up collar, and fitting close to the chin. The right hand, which at first attracted my attention, was clasping, without any great pressure, the left hand; both hands were in perfect repose, and the large blue veins of the right hand were conspicuous. I remember thinking that the hand was like the hand of Velasquez's magnificent 'Dead Knight' in the National Gallery. I looked at my visitor for some seconds, and was perfectly sure that he was not a reality. A thousand thoughts came crowding upon me, but not the least feeling of alarm, or even uneasiness; curiosity and a strong interest were uppermost. For an instant I felt eager to make a sketch of my friend, and I looked at a tray on my right for a pencil; then I thought, 'Upstairs I have a sketch-book—shall I fetch it?' There he sat, and I was fascinated; afraid, not of his staying, *but lest he should go*. Stopping at my writing, I lifted my left hand from the paper, stretched it out to the pile of books, and moved the top one. I cannot explain why I did this—my arm passed in front of the figure, and it vanished. I was simply disappointed, and nothing more. I went on with my writing as if nothing had happened, perhaps for another five minutes, and I had actually got to the last few words of what I had determined to extract when the figure appeared again, exactly in the same place and attitude as before. I saw the hands close to my own; I turned my head again, to examine

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him more closely, and I was framing a sentence to address to him when I discovered that I did not dare to speak. *I was afraid of the sound of my own voice.* There he sat, and there sat I. I turned my head again to my work, and finished writing the two or three words I still had to write. The paper and my notes are at this moment before me, and exhibit not the slightest tremor or nervousness. I could point out the words I was writing when the phantom came and when he disappeared. Having finished my task, I shut the book and threw it on the table; it made a slight noise as it fell—the figure vanished.

"Throwing myself back in my chair, I sat for some seconds looking at the fire with a curious mixture of feeling, and I remember wondering whether my friend would come again, and if he did whether he would hide the fire from me. Then, first there stole upon me a dread and a suspicion that I was beginning to lose my nerve; I remember yawning; then I rose, lit my bedroom candle, took my books into the inner library, mounted the chair as before, and replaced five of the volumes; the sixth I brought back and laid upon the table where I had been writing when the phantom did me the honour to appear to me. By this time I had lost all my sense of uneasiness. I blew out the four candles, and marched off to bed, where I slept the sleep of the just or the guilty—I know not which—but I slept very soundly.

"This is a simple and unvarnished narrative of facts. Explanation, theory, or inference I leave to others."

Dr. Wilks's letter is as follows:—

"Putting aside the supposition of a trick, the story resolves itself into the question whether the appearance of the man beside him (Dr. Jessopp) was objective or subjective. Under ordinary circumstances when we see an object the latter is material, and forms an image on the retina; this is mentally known through a perceptive part of the brain; the mere retinal image is not enough to constitute vision, as pictures are constantly painted upon the retina which are never discerned. Now it is possible for this perceptive part of the brain to be thrown into an active condition quite independent of the normal stimulus conducted to it from the retina, and under these circumstances the person apparently sees an object which, by the law of our nature, is projected by him a certain distance before the eye. This is common enough in fever and in *delirium tremens*, where patients see people and animals around them whose reality is such that the memory of these becomes a part of the experience of their future lives. In mental derangements these hallucinations are also common, and patients see objects and hear voices which have no external existence. So it is in our dreams, from which we may be suddenly aroused by a great noise when all is still around, the auditory perceptive centre of the brain having been abnormally excited.

"In normal conditions, the sight of an object implies the painting of it on the retina, as the hearing a noise implies the vibration of the drum of the ear. If sight and hearing occur without these normal excitants of the nerve, the brain must have been stimulated from within, and the impressions are abnormal and subjective.

"At the present time we have no knowledge that anything in the likeness of a ghost or anything that has not a material basis can excite an image on the retina; whereas we do know that under abnormal conditions the brain may be stimulated so as to produce a visual impression independent of any such image on the retina. The probabilities are then immensely in favour of the appearance which the Doctor saw being subjective rather than objective. We have only to suppose that those very common abnormal conditions of brain which are observed in bad health may occur under exceptional circumstances in an otherwise healthy organ to account for the occasional appearance of ghosts.

"The probabilities are also in favour of this view from other considerations. First, there seems no reason why the spirits of another world should prefer

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midnight for their visits, but the reasons are obvious why we should conjure them up at that time. Then, again, the want of individuality shown by this particular ghost; an ordinary mortal would find it very difficult to put himself 'in exactly the same place and attitude as before' on his appearance a second time, as this apparition did, and then so dependent was it upon the observer, that when the latter put his arm up it was gone, and the same occurred on the second occasion on another movement. How those movements of the Doctor could have affected a real object does not seem clear, nor why it could not be gazed at from a different point of view. It may be noticed, too, that its nearness corresponded with the focussing of the Doctor's eyes to objects close around him."

We may add in regard to Dr. Jessopp's communication that we are informed that a friend of Dr. Jessopp's had been staying with him a short time previously. He was a priest of the Roman Catholic Church, and resembled in dress and person the description given by Dr. Jessopp of the apparition. Again, the subject of Dr. Jessopp's study, we are told, had been, "A Generation of a Norfolk House," which described the sufferings of a Catholic family in the reign of Elizabeth—a thrilling story, calculated to induce a mental condition favourable to hallucinations.

Dr. Jessopp himself has been good enough to reply to some inquiries we addressed him, in the following terms:—

"The School House, Norwich,
"6, February, 1880.

"SIR,—I have been so closely occupied during the last few weeks that it has been quite impossible for me to reply to, or even read through, the hundreds of letters which I have received on the subject of the apparition which you ask me to enter upon more fully in your pages. At the present stage, and while my hands are so full as they are, I can only write very briefly.

"Dr. Wilks' theory is one which, to my mind, only required stating in his own lucid and forcible language to be at once accepted.

"As to goblins habitually squatting down beside visitors at Mannington, who sit up into the small hours, the notion is ridiculous.

"One tells me that he has done his best to conjure up my phantom, but the ghost will not come. How should it? It has its dwelling-place in my own skull—somewhere! Should it trouble me again, let the world be sure, I shall hold my tongue about the appearance, if for no other reason than because to a man of narrow means, 500 postage stamps are a consideration.

"For the rest, it may be well to let your readers know that I am very rarely troubled with dreams—that I am a hard matter-of-fact person—that I passed my climacteric some few years ago, and—possibly because a sinful generation and an ungrateful country have not awarded me that substantial recognition of my merits which would be grateful to my self-esteem to receive—that I am more prone to be cynical than sanguine, morosely critical than morbidly sympathetic—a railer sometimes, a ranter seldom.

"If at any future time some weird nocturnal personage—be he visible, tangible, or audible—be he in the body or out of the body—a carcase or a shadow—come to me with tidings of a liberal increase to my basket and my store, and give me reason to believe his message, I shall hail his advent with reverential joy; otherwise, I shall prefer his keeping out of my way. It is quite clear to me that there are hundreds of people in a fitter frame of mind to receive his revelations.

"Your obedient servant,
"AUGUSTUS JESSOPP.

"D. Hack Tuke, M.D."

Dr. Wilks has placed at our disposal a letter which he received in consequence of his remarks in the *Athenæum*. It is worthy of record:—

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"January 25, 1880.

"SIR,—I have read with much interest your letter to the *Athenæum* about Dr. Jessopp's case, because my father exhibits the same mental phenomena, but in a more remarkable way. He is at least 73 years of age, and leads a quiet, well-regulated life. His health is good, but he gets once nearly every year an attack of bronchitis. He is not at all imaginative. Nearly every night for the past two years, on awaking about three or four o'clock, he has distinctly seen one or more figures in different parts of the room, sometimes stationary, sometimes moving about. As long as he remains recumbent, there they remain, but when he sits up they disappear. He is not at all afraid of them, and has often grasped at them or thrown something at them. He does not recognise any of the apparitions, and they vary infinitely. I have had occasion sometimes to sleep in a separate bed in his room, and he has several times called me to see them, and has spoken to me while he looked at them, just as he speaks ordinarily. He has several times consulted his physician here about the matter, but he says he never met with a case of the kind, and could do nothing for him.

"Your obedient servant,

* * *

"Samuel Wilks, M.D."

We have received the following letter from a Physician, narrating two psychological experiences, in one of which another element enters, namely, an external event coincident with the subjective impression. Had our correspondent been expected by his family at the time, the explanation of "expectant attention" in an abnormal condition of the nervous system might have sufficed, if it be admitted that *two* persons can, through this cause, have optical allusions at the same moment. Whether in such cases mere coincidence is a sufficient solution, or whether the two circumstances stand in any causal relation must be decided by such an accumulation of evidence as would render the first hypothesis untenable :—

"February 12, 1880.

"MY DEAR DR. TUKE,—Although the following circumstance is not exactly similar in kind to that related by Dr. Jessopp, you may like to make use of it. At any rate it is at your service, and you may rely upon its being quite accurate.

"One day, some years ago, two of my female relations were looking out of a window in Greenwich just opposite the Hospital, and both thought they saw me pass and look in. One of them ran immediately to the door, but to her astonishment could see no one either up or down the street. At this time I was not expected, being, as all my family supposed, in Paris. But within a quarter of a hour I arrived at Greenwich. When I did enter I was called to account for the practical joke I was supposed to have played upon my relations by peeping in at the window and then concealing myself, and it was with some difficulty I convinced them that I had come straight to the house.

"Some years after this, my wife and daughter (not the relations referred to previously), were sitting in the dining-room, when they both saw an old lady enter at the gate and walk up to the steps leading to the front door of the house. My wife said to her daughter, 'What can bring old Mrs. C—— out in such a flood of rain? Run and open the door, that she may not have to wait for the servant to answer the bell.' On opening the door there was no one there, nor in the garden.

"Some other curious things of the same character have occurred, but as the illusion affected only *a single person*, I refrain from mentioning them, as they might arise from the physical condition of the parties concerned, which could hardly, I think, be the case with the others.

"Very sincerely yours,

"D. Hack Tuke, M.D. "M.D."

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